

I am concerned about the Common Core standards being implemented in 45 of the 50 states. You should be too. With the decision of the Michigan legislature to "pause" the implementation in these standards during the budget process it is my hope that more people will take an interest in them before it is too late. Sadly, the Michigan house chose to listen to the big money lobbyists and corporations involved instead of the people. I am still hopeful the Senate will do the right thing and opt out of the federally controlled common core standards all together, for when have resolutions, term, and conditions ever worked against the federal government? In my view, this issue can unite folks from both the left and the right in agreement that these standards will usurp the power of states and ultimately local folks (school boards, parents, and educators) to shape how and what our children learn.

The common core standards (CCS) are K-12 national standards for testing. They will almost certainly become a national curriculum. If adopted by public schools everywhere, they quickly become the 'only kid on the block' by eliminating any choice and competition among testing companies and textbook manufacturers. Once the ACT and SAT are aligned with Common Core, even homeschoolers and religious schools will have no choice but to make sure their students' learning includes common core standards material. Two local schools (CAS and ILS) recently hired a new administrators to help transition into the adoption of the standards. One said in an interview, she wants to help teachers think outside the box, but I fear these new standards will simply have them teaching to the tests. In my view, people free of government intervention think "out of the box" not the other way around. Competition and choice help the best products become successful. Politicians and bureaucrats hinder success.

The standards were developed by an unholy alliance of big corporations (I've seen Exxon Mobile has been pushing them in commercials), private foundations (most notably the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation), private trade organizations, and the federal government. We are told that many teachers had input into the process, but I highly doubt it. Government is very good at facilitating meetings to make you think you are participating in something when really they are pulling the strings the entire time. Two Washington DC based nonprofits: The National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) facilitated the process and own the copyrighted standards. Adoption was "voluntary" but there were some major incentives to doing so...namely federal dollars and/or waivers. Since the federal government has no constitutional authority over education, this is money that never should have left our state in the first place. Many states that chose to adopt the standards did so as part of the Obama administration's "Race to the Top" grant application process or in order to receive a waiver from provisions in the despised No Child Left Behind. Ironically, one piece I read called the common core standards "no child left behind on steroids". In Michigan they were adopted by the State Board of Education a mere two weeks after they were introduced. They have never been tested anywhere in the United States and three of the experts on the validation committee have refused to sign off on them.

Common core standards have been sold to many as a way for us to compete with the rest of the world...to create "workers for the global economy". Common core supporter, Michelle Rhee said we need to be more like China. But do we really? True the Chinese do better on tests than their American counterparts (and there are many reasons for that) but the Chinese train their children to be productive workers, not innovators and entrepreneurs....something that most likely results when you "suggest" the reading of executive orders and technical manuals instead of literary classics.

There are many things we can do to fix education, but the most pressing is getting Washington DC out of it. If you agree with me, please vote no to common core standards.

Stephenie Jacobson  
7950 Golf View Drive  
Cheboygan, MI 49721